

Lobbying 101

Lobbying – attempting to influence government decisions

Lobbyist – an individual who represents an organized interest before government

Who do we lobby?

- Legislators and/or legislative staffers
- Executive Branch officials
- Cabinet members/ agency representatives
- Local government officials: school board members, borough council/township supervisors, and committee members

Why do we lobby?

- To influence and bring about change
- It is the best way to communicate directly with policy makers
- To create the perception of widespread and expansive support of the issue

Preparing for your lobby visit – remember ABCDEFG:

Attitude

- You are the expert
- Remember that public officials work for you
- They are just regular people

Be knowledgeable of the person you are lobbying

- Party affiliation
- Term in office
- Position on issue discussing
- What committee she/he on?

Clarify your issue

- Bill name/number
- Where it is in the process
- Sponsors names
- Proponents/ Opponents
- Other legislators supporting it

Do your homework

- The internet
- Organizations and interest groups

Establish goals and objectives of the meeting

- Remember this is a process
- Get your ask down – Will he/she:
 - Support/oppose the bill?
 - Co-sponsor the bill?
 - Move it forward in the process? (ex. Committee to floor)
 - Help to get a fellow legislator(s) to support the bill?

Figure out your best timing

Get your script together

- Assign roles
- Remember the objective of the meeting
- Develop and tailor your message

Lobbying Etiquette: The Do's and Don'ts of Lobbying

DO:

- Make an appointment
- Dress neatly
- Be punctual, but be prepared to wait
- Introduce yourself
- Stick to the subject
- Be honest
- Know something about the public official
- Be cordial to all staff members in the office
- Know the name and number of the bill/ name of the initiative, and key points on it
- Provide clear and concise documents/materials
- Be tolerant of the views of others
- Fill out a lobby report form
- Thank the public official for the meeting
- Remember you are creating important change!

DON'T:

- Be angry/ hostile ("I'm a taxpayer!")
- Threaten (I'll remember this at the polls!")
- Lecture the public official
- Be afraid to be assertive
- Take rejection personally
- Have a lot of material
- Lose credibility- it will affect everyone who lobbies on the subject matter after you
- Be afraid to admit when you are unsure of an answer to a question. You can always follow-up with him/her.

HELPFUL HINTS:

1. Confirm your appointment and location day beforehand
2. Bring a copy of the legislation with you
3. Know the outcome that you want going into the meeting
4. Prioritize your points
5. Know the background of the official
6. Try to start with common ground
7. Make yourself available as a resource
8. Thank the staff person and get his/her business card
9. Write a follow-up thank you letter and be sure to reiterate your points